



Literacy Volunteers
of Greater Worcester

ANNUAL REPORT

FY2016

Literacy Volunteers of Greater Worcester (LVGW) reached 43 years of educating adults on English Language skill to help people thrive in 2016. A record number of 600 participants were served in this fiscal year! Break-even annual financials were accomplished, no easy challenge, but one that was met with both hard work and dedication to continue providing effective ESL programming to our constituents! Under the leadership of the new Interim Executive Director appointed in the Spring, the organization was both assessed and managed to build a new stronger team at LVGW. This report highlights the organizational programming, accomplishments and challenges in FY2016.



ANNUAL REPORT FY2016

As a well-established non-profit on the Worcester scene, Literacy Volunteers of Greater Worcester gains much of its strength from the commitment of the local community, the stellar reputation of its teachers, standardized assessments, and a solid training curriculum. Both students and tutors come to our program primarily based upon word-of-mouth and personal or community referrals.

One of the major strengths of our program, compared to other ESL/literacy programs in the area, lies in our unique approach to providing services to our students. We recognize that students have various needs and backgrounds and thus, offer 3 different programming options to help our students acquire the English language skills they are seeking:

1. Those looking for an immediate option and who feel comfortable in a group setting are referred to our Literacy Academy group course offerings, where they can take group ESL courses that fit their ability, interest and schedule.
2. Those students who either desire and/or require a more individualized one-to-one learning process are directed to apply to our one-to-one tutoring program.
3. Lastly, for those students whose schedules do not allow them to access either program, we have 2 language laboratories - one housed on Portable Kindlefire Tablets at our Literacy Academy at 90 Madison Place and the other housed on desktops at the Worcester Public Library (WPL). Desktop and tablet computers are equipped with the acclaimed Rosetta Stone® software.

Some students take classes only, some work solely with a tutor but over half our tutored students engage in a combination of tutor and classes. The language laboratories have been a supplement. Upon initial intakes, we offer all programming options and encourage use of multiple programs for more intensive impact and learning.

OUR VOLUNTEERS

An invaluable resource, and one that can't be underestimated, is the caliber and dedication of our volunteer tutors who share their time and expertise with students, often going above and beyond to help them acclimate to life in the United States. Our volunteer tutors come from all walks of life, with a large portion of retired teachers. In fact, one tutor, a retired reading teacher in the public school system, organized a small group of students, all of whom were illiterate in the native languages, to assist them in their quest to master the written word during FY16. One-hundred and thirty-four volunteers were trained tutors and another twenty volunteers supported our organization primarily for annual events.

Making an Impact FY2016 Highlights



- **600 Students Served**
- **47 ESL Course Offerings**
- **150 ESL Matches** between a Volunteer Tutor and Student
- **5,200 Hours** of One-to-One ESL Tutoring
- **45 Volunteer Tutors** Trained and Engaged

EDUCATION

Funding received from foundations, corporations and individuals support the core programs - tutoring and ESL Group Courses for English-language literacy skill development offered at Literacy Academy and WPL. Tutoring and course program statistics from FY16 include:

TUTORING: One-to-One Student/Tutor ESL Instruction and Tutor Training

- **150 Student/Tutor matches (5,200 hours)** in our one-to-one Weekly Tutoring
- **45 ESL Volunteer Tutors trained** in three separate 18-hour ESL Volunteer Tutor Trainings
- **5 Students engaged (50 hours over 6 weeks)** in individual and small group tutoring via the Summer 2016 Portable Language Kindlefire Tablets with Clark University Intern
- **25 students engaged** in the twice weekly Reading Circle



Student Amal receiving tutoring from our intern, Sia.

ENGLISH LITERACY ESL COURSES

- **47 - ESL Courses**, with students averaging participation in 2 courses each
 - **18 Beginner, faculty-led instruction** combining computer ESL software and various teaching methods at the WPL Computer Lab Classroom
 - **25 Intermediate, ESL faculty-led instruction** with various teaching methods incorporating the Smartboard at the LVGW Literacy Academy Classroom
 - Targeted specialized subjects including– *ESL for Work & Women & Mothers.*
 - **4 UMass Medical School Partnership ESL courses** for immigrant student community offered on campus (*self-supported*)

600 students participated in programming – up 10% from last year!



Our June 2016 Tutor Training class of 17 new Volunteer Tutors.



GRANTS & FUNDRAISING

Literacy Volunteers worked to maintain its grant revenues and secured both new and continued foundation support from funders including:

- AbbVie
- Albert W. Rice Foundation
- BayState Savings Bank
- Bernatchez Family Foundation
- Commerce Bank
- Fred Harris Daniels Foundation
- George Alden Trust
- Greater Worcester Community Foundation
- Hoche-Scofield Foundation
- Literacy Volunteers of MA
- Mildred H. McEvoy Foundation
- National Grid
- People's United Community Foundation
- Reach Out for Schools
- Stoddard Charitable Trust
- The Fletcher Foundation
- The Schwartz Foundation
- UniBank

Please visit <http://www.lvgw.org/donors/> for a complete list.

LVGW was able to achieve break-even annual financials in FY16, providing a solid sustainable foundation to start FY17.

Organizational challenges included lower fundraising amounts than forecasted for both foundations and individual donations leading.

LVGW rebound quickly in the last quarter with restructuring, fundraising outreach, programs and planning with a newly restructured team.

We are thankful for the generosity and kindness of so many.

Making an Impact Reading Circle

Some of those who come to us to learn English are illiterate in their native languages and cannot take even the Basic Survival ESL class, but we still strive to help. One of our tutors embraced this challenge earlier in the year and formed a Reading Circle to meet twice weekly with small groups.

Sarah who hails from a small village in Kenya was one of the students in this subset of tutoring. Sarah, in her early sixties, fled her native country as the terrorist group, Al-Shabaab, began to gain ground and threaten daily existence. She arrived in Worcester, not speaking any English, having never seen a map, unable to recognize any letters in an alphabet, and having never used money. She was unable to function in the modern world and looked completely bewildered.

After a half a year working with our Reading Circles tutor, Sarah is now able to read the street signs so that she can take a bus, go food shopping using dollars and cents, and is even able to sound out basic words. When Sarah came to our office a few weeks ago, she was smiling as she slowly explained to LVGW how this kindness and teaching style, has changed her life and allowed her to be happy once again – even in a place far away from her familiar village.



IMPACT MEASUREMENT

Standardized Department of Secondary Education Assessment Testing was applied to tutored students in the form of Best Plus, MAPT and TABE. Students receiving pre-/post-testing in FY16 showed a .4 average SPL level. In Massachusetts and within national research, ESL education shows that a significant number of hours is required to advance one level as; Range: 100hrs (beginner) - 170hrs (high intermediate) ESL instruction is required for an ESL student to advance 1 SPL level. The tutored students tested received an average of 35 hours of ESL English language reflected a **gain of .4 SPL growth** with the year or ratio of .4:35 - which indicates a very good instructional and learning impact result for hours provided in comparison to ratio of 1:100 (Beginner) or 1:170 (Intermediate.)

Our one-to-one tutor training program offers three free, comprehensive, 18-hour multi-day trainings a year to prepare qualified individuals to tutor an adult ESL student to help them reach their English language literacy proficiency goals. We followed proven curriculum provided by our state affiliation with Literacy Volunteers of Massachusetts. Before matching a student with a tutor, LVGW conducts a student in-take process which includes collection of demographic and educational information and application of a standardized Best Plus language testing system we apply for current conversation ability level and again before the end of the fiscal year, if they have reached 30 hours or more. The cost for implementation of a pre- and post-test was \$3.00 per student in FY16.

Our ESL class offerings include several offerings such as *Survival English*, *Conversational English*, *Beginner Reading and Writing*, *Women & Mothers: Helping Your Schoolchild* and *ESL English for Work*. In addition to the curriculum designed by our experienced ESL faculty, students have the option to self-study using Rosetta Stone® language learning software, which is installed on each computer in the laboratory. We also arranged for a Clark University Summer Intern to provide individual or small group tutoring three afternoons a week on our Portable Language Lab Kindlefire tablets in our Literacy Academy at 90 Madison Place.

PROGRAMMING AND FUNDRAISING EVENT HIGHLIGHTS

- A first **Coffee and Conversation Social** was held in honor of Volunteer Recognition Week in April, 2016. Volunteers, tutors and teachers came together in a casual gathering at the LVGW office. It was such a well-received event that we plan to repeat it annually to continue building relationships, share stories and best practices, and recognize our volunteers.
- The **Scrabble Scrimmage** signature social and fundraising event was held on May 21, 2016. Nearly \$5,000 was raised from sponsors including Commerce Bank and Bay State Savings, in addition to attendees. This event ties into our work and creates a social experience while raising funds with much fun for all in attendance!



The Bay State Scrabblers team took 1st place.



- On June 8th, an **International Potluck Lunch** was held for our students, volunteers and faculty following our Volunteer Tutor and Faculty **In-Service**. Our In-Service focused on new curriculum and instruction methods for ESL instruction, which was presented by one of our Volunteer Tutors who LVGW sponsored to represent LVGW at the state-wide Massachusetts Adult Education Conference. A new education and recognition practice we hope to continue. Six In-Service trainings are scheduled each year for Tutors/Teachers.

FINANCIALS

End of year financials as of June 30, 2016:

• Cash assets	\$121,243
• Revenues	\$217,142
• Expenses	\$217,402

A financial review was conducted by David Boulay, Jr, CPA, Worcester, MA

SUMMARY

The Board of Directors along with the new Interim Executive Director have led the organization to a desirable outcome in FY16 and have initiated a FY17 Strategy and Goal Plan after holding a Planning Retreat at the Board President's home in May. After achieving break even annual finances, developing a sustainable plan and creating a very motivated and highly qualified team, we look forward to providing the English language skills for the community in need in FY17.

Literacy Volunteers of Greater Worcester thanks all those who provided the support this past year for the English language skill education needed in our ESL community. Our ESL community is not only provided with English Language skills to survive but to thrive, and we celebrate both our differences and similarities within our educational and acclimation programming. Dual cultural enrichment and acclimation is an underlying accomplishment in our organization during this crucial time which calls for unity, empowerment of minorities and acceptance of diversity.

Yours in Community,

Jolene

Jolene Jennings
Executive Director

Kathleen

Kathleen Gagne
Board President